

**TORRINGTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
Tuesday, September 10, 2013
Torrington High School, Library/Media Center
Major Besse Drive**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:03pm.

ROLL CALL:

Present: Mr. Brady, Mrs. Cappabianca (arrived at 8:16pm), Mrs. Hoehne, Mr. Kissko, Mr. Merola, Mr. Nargi, Mr. Rovero, Mr. Thibault, Mr. Traub, Mrs. Batchelder, Mrs. Klozcko,

Absent: Mr. Cavagnero, Mr. Campolieta, Mayor Bingham

At 6:04 p.m. Mr. Traub made a motion to go into recess to wait for the presenter. Mr. Thibault seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous. At 6:08 p.m. the meeting was brought back into session.

RECEIVE INFORMATION ON URBAN ACT GRANT

Mr. Dave Stygar presented to the Board. The track, football field and bleacher areas are the primary focus of this grant.

Mr. Nargi asked how the amount of \$2.7 million was obtained and if this amount is enough to cover all the costs of a project this size by today's standards. He also asked if there are any funds not used in the three (3) primary areas and can that money be put toward any of the other fields.

Mr. Thibault asked, from an administrative point of view, what flexibilities the Board may have regarding this grant.

Mr. Merola asked what say the Board of Education has regarding this grant because it is an Urban Act Grant, a community grant; can the Board of Education even refuse to accept this grant? He stated the Mayor should be present to discuss these issues.

Mr. Traub stated that the City of Torrington owns the fields but the Board of Education is responsible for the costs and maintenance of them. These are questions between the City of Torrington and the Board of Education. The purpose of this special meeting is to receive information regarding this grant and then they will have to discuss the details with the City of Torrington.

Mrs. Batchelder asked what type of grant this is and how the financial transactions are handled.

Mr. Nargi asked if the Board of Education would have to budget money for this project.

Mr. Traub stated the City of Torrington is getting this grant and it has not been determined if the City of Torrington or the Board of Education is going to be renovating the athletic fields. He asked if there would be any funds if this project goes over budget.

Mrs. Batchelder asked if Mr. Stygar could deny any invoices that are submitted.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked if the grant is going to cover the entire cost of this project and if the City of Torrington is putting any money into this project. She stated her concern is that this amount is not enough to cover a project of this size and she would like to know how the additional costs would be covered and by whom.

Mr. Traub asked if the grant could be returned. He then asked how long the grant can be held if additional funds need to be raised by the City of Torrington to cover any costs that surpass the amount of the grant.

Mrs. Cappabianca asked what the average maintenance costs would be for this type of field.

Mr. Nargi asked about the funds for consultants.

Mrs. Hoehne asked why the grant does not state anywhere in the paperwork that it is for the City of Torrington.

Mr. Stygar stated that the information the Board of Education has is all the information he received after the grant was approved.

Mrs. Cappabianca questioned if the maintenance of the field had to be done by a professional contractor or if the school custodial staff can provide adequate maintenance. She also had questions about the "links to cancer and turf fields."

Mr. Nargi wanted to know the most recent community in the State that had the same type of project completed.

Mr. Traub invited State Representative Michelle Cook to speak to the Board of Education regarding the Urban Act Grant.

Mr. Thibault stated that if the athletic fields are community property then the City of Torrington should be responsible for the maintenance and costs associated with it. He also has concerns regarding the lack of information provided to the Board of Education.

Information sharing and transparency was discussed.

Mr. Merola voiced concerns regarding the way information was presented to him during the last Board meeting.

Mr. Nargi asked when construction could begin, and what the Board of Education is supposed to do for the spring athletes—he asked who would not have a place to practice while the fields were being renovated.

He stated that the Board of Education has to be brought “into the loop” not for monetary purposes but administrative purposes; they have a responsibility towards the student athletes. He then stated his disappointment at the Mayor being absent from this meeting.

Mr. Ed Pruum joined Michelle Cook to answer questions from the Board of Education members. He spoke to the Board regarding the Urban Act Grant.

Mrs. Hoehne asked when the plans for this grant began. She stated her displeasure at the lack of communication and now that the Board has more information they can make a more informed decision on how they want to be involved.

Mrs. Cappabianca said she has heard mixed opinions regarding a turf field. She stated her disappointment regarding the “communication problem” and concerns about maintenance costs and finding money in the Board of Education budget.

Mr. Traub stated that one of the biggest concerns the Board of Education has is the shelf life of a turf field and the future costs associated with that; is the City of Torrington going to expect the Board of Education to find that money in their capital budget.

An un-named man addressed the Board regarding the concerns involved with the Urban Act Grant.

Mr. Nargi asked when this process was started, if it was intended to be a bond or a grant.

The Board members spoke about having a discussion with the City Council and how to raise the costs of a replacement turf field when this one expires.

Mr. Traub asked if there are grants they can get for a replacement turf field.

Mr. Nargi said the community members attending this meeting to advocate for this grant should really be advocating to the City Council because based on the information learned at this meeting the Board of Education has no say in the matter.

SCHOOL/COMMUNITY SESSION

Mr. Traub read aloud the purpose and rules of the School/Community Session.

There were two (2) speakers.

ITEMS FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Mr. Merola said he heard a rumor that some of the faculty had a fear of retaliation if they attended the turf meeting and he wanted to know where that came from; he stated that if that is the opinion of the faculty, it is not a good thing.

Mr. Traub told Mr. Merola that Mr. Cavagnero made a motion at the last meeting that no faculty should attend the turf meeting until the Board of Education had more information regarding this grant.

Mr. Jerry Carbone addressed the Board regarding the motion, or lack of a motion; in his opinion, made by Mr. Cavagnero at the last meeting.

Mr. Mario Longobucco, a member of the turf committee, addressed the Board regarding communication methods.

Mr. Lou Reynolds spoke to the Board regarding consultants.

Mrs. Cappabianca stated her thoughts on what Mr. Cavagnero's intentions were at the last meeting with regard to the turf meeting. She said they have to keep the best interests of the kids in mind and they need to be well informed to make the right decisions so the kids will benefit. She does not want to put a burden on future Boards of Education and taxpayers; she wants it made clear that if the Board of Education has no say in this matter that fact is on the record.

Mr. Rovero made a motion to adjourn at 7:52pm. The motion was withdrawn.

Mr. Mike Fritch addressed the Board of Education regarding the issue of faculty being told not to attend the turf meeting. He said a supervisor told them this, but will not disclose the name of the supervisor.

Mr. Merola and Mr. Nargi voiced their grave concerns regarding this matter.

Mr. Mike McKenna spoke to the Board of Education regarding the recommendation made at the last Board meeting that faculty do not attend the turf meeting until the Board of Education had more information regarding the Urban Act Grant. He said he relayed this information to the coaching staff and told them to make their own decision to attend or not.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Rovero made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. Mr. Brady seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.